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AIM's founder forms campus watchdog unit

By Carol Innerst
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Reed Irvine, the founder of Accuracy in Media, has formed a new conservative watchdog agency designed to stem the flow of disinformation from liberal college professors, he said yesterday.

"I decided that the problem in journalism, the problem we find with the media, is the education of journalists," said Mr. Reed, AIM's chairman. "I thought maybe we ought to go to the root of the problem instead of working on the manifestation of its ailments."

Accuracy in Academia will make its presence known on campuses this September, Mr. Irvine said.

His plan is to focus mainly on liberal arts colleges and such subjects as political science, history and sociology, rather than on technical fields.

"I don't have huge problems with the techniques of laying out a newspaper," he said, when asked specifically about monitoring schools of journalism.

Charging that there are "10,000 to 20,000 Marxist professors" on college campuses in the country, Mr. Irvine said his plan is to have knowledgeable senior citizens, who in many areas can audit classes at public universities at no charge, volunteer to observe, challenge and expose professors who disseminate inaccurate and biased information to students.

He also expects to find some students of sturdy character willing to challenge what they hear at the risk of incurring professorial wrath and possibly a poor grade, he said.

The University of Maryland at College Park will be the prime target in the Washington area, he said.

College Park Chancellor John B. Slaughter said: "Research efforts of lesser value have been suggested, though it's hard for me to imagine what. We would not find it necessary to act on his findings one way or the other. Universities are likely to be more liberal than other institutions because part of liberalness is having openness to inquiry."

One of the professors Accuracy in Academia is interested in tracking is Bertell Ollman, once at the University of Maryland and now at New York University, Mr. Irvine said.

Maryland in 1978 denied Mr. Ollman the chairmanship of the Government and Politics Department at College Park. He sued, charging that the denial was based on his Marxist political beliefs. The courts upheld the university administration, although fellow professors in the department found him acceptable, a university spokesman said.

When they spot a blatant case of disinformation, Mr. Irvine said the course auditors would question professors. If the class format is a lecture and there is no opportunity for discussion, he said they could take up the issue with the professor or teaching assistant after class. If not satisfied, the auditors would expose the teachers through campus publications and an Accuracy in Academia newsletter.

They also might distribute alternate reading lists and materials, he said.

Auditors would not "disrupt" classes, he said. "We want people to behave themselves."

Accuracy in Academia was incorporated early this year, said Mr. Irvine. He is on its "working" board of directors, but will not become executive director. He hopes to hire a recent college graduate as national coordinator.